

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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Contact: Kevin O'Connell
202-225-6335

HINCHEY CALLS FOR MORE AGGRESSIVE PCB CLEANUP

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today issued the following statement regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's proposal to remove PCBs from the Hudson River:

"I support the position of Scenic Hudson and others that the Environmental Protection Agency should seek to remove at least 25 percent more PCBs from the Hudson River than currently proposed. While I commend EPA for its painstaking work in preparing the cleanup plan, removing more PCBs would do more to reduce the serious risks associated with PCBs.

"EPA has underestimated the risk to certain members of communities along the river such as people who subsistence fish, as well as those who are most vulnerable to PCB exposure – women and children. The impact of bioaccumulation, the process through which PCBs enter the food chain through fish and move upward rapidly through animals to humans, has not been given adequate weight. In addition, EPA has overstated the natural breakdown capability of PCBs. New data from a recent New York State Department of Environmental Conservation study, which uncovered disturbing new routes of PCB-exposure for people, also must be taken into account.

"EPA's plan is to remove 100,600 pounds of PCBs from the upriver hot spots. This is an excellent start, but it would still leave 39,000 pounds of PCBs in place. For an increase in cost of eight percent, EPA could remove 25 percent more PCBs. This would be a sensible amendment to the plan and would more thoroughly reduce the risks posed by the contamination."

EPA released its Hudson River cleanup proposal in December 2000. Today marks the close of the period in which the public had the opportunity to submit comments.

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2431 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

E-mail: kevin.o'connell@mail.house.gov
Pager: 800-759-8888 PIN: 1386458